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Security Council

Fifty-first Year

Provisional

3716th Meeting

Wednesday, 27 November 1996, 12.15 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wisnumurti	(Indonesia)
Members:	Botswana	Mr. Motswagae
	Chile	Mr. Larraín
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Egypt	Mr. Awaad
	France	Mr. Ladsous
	Germany	Mr. Eitel
	Guinea-Bissau	Mr. Lopes da Rosa
	Honduras	Mr. Rendón Barnica
	Italy	Mr. Ferrarin
	Poland	Mr. Wlosowicz
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Park
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Gomersall
	United States of America	Mr. Inderfurth

Agenda

The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1058 (1996) (S/1996/961)

96-86919 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 12.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1058 (1996) (S/1996/961)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Maleski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force pursuant to Security Council resolution 1058 (1996) (S/1996/961).

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1996/979, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council have received photocopies of a letter dated 19 November 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of a letter dated 18 November 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia addressed to the Secretary-General, which will be issued under the symbol S/1996/983.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I call on the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to make a statement before the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): In precisely two weeks, it will be four years since the Security Council — in response to an appeal by the leadership of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia — approved the deployment of the first United Nations peacekeeping operation in history to be preventive in nature. A decision was taken to send a United Nations military contingent to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Many of us remember that time well. In December 1992, a number of regions of the former Yugoslavia were swept up in bloody conflict. The United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) — first established at that time as part of the United Nations Protection Force and then as an independent mission — played an important role in preventing a widening of the Yugoslav crisis and in the stabilization of the internal situation of Macedonia. This reaffirmed in practice the vitality of the concept of preventive diplomacy.

The United Nations has the right to be proud of the success of this operation and we pay due tribute to the personnel of UNPREDEP, among whom there are representatives of the Russian Federation.

In describing UNPREDEP as a successful operation, we believe first and foremost that the original objective of the deployment of a United Nations preventive mission in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia — averting the spillover into that country of conflicts from other regions of the former Yugoslavia — was achieved and that the mandate which the mission had been given by the Security Council has been fulfilled.

The situation in the region itself has radically changed. Hostilities have ceased and, thanks to the collective efforts of the international community, the process of stabilization is gaining momentum. These positive changes are reflected in the significant change in the relationships between Macedonia and its neighbours, primarily the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Guided by these very objective and universally recognized criteria in the sphere of peacekeeping, we believe that it is right and justified to raise the question of shutting down UNPREDEP. If we act out of inertia and transform this operation into something inviolable by maintaining it, we run the risk of wiping out all the operation's earlier positive achievements and, indeed, of calling into question the unique experience of preventive peacekeeping.

It is precisely from that point of view that the Russian Federation is approaching today's draft resolution, which provides, for the first time, for a substantive reduction — by nearly one third — of the size of UNPREDEP. We also take note of the draft resolution's oblique reference to the possibility for a full drawing down of the operation.

These aspects represent a definite step forward. At the same time, in our view, they are now already clearly insufficient. In the light of the evolving situation in the region over the past year and of the current trend towards a further positive evolution, we do not see the point of maintaining UNPREDEP after May 1997. It is precisely for that reason that we proposed including a clear statement in the text of the draft resolution that the present extension of the UNPREDEP mandate must be the last.

Unfortunately, our principled position is not reflected in the draft resolution and we shall therefore be unable to support it. At the same time, we have taken into account the positions of the other members of the Security Council, the Macedonian leadership and the troop-contributing countries and shall not block the adoption of a decision today. We shall abstain on the vote.

In conclusion, I should like to state that the Russian Federation firmly believes that this is the final extension of the UNPREDEP mandate. Moreover, our approach in no way reflects an underestimation of the real problems in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, nor does it exclude the possibility of a further international presence in that country — including a United Nations presence — in order to support and maintain those programmes currently being implemented in that country with international assistance.

However, it is clear that the presence in that country of United Nations military contingents must cease after May 1997. We have no doubts whatsoever on that score and we do not want our partners to entertain any such doubts. That is important in preparing to consider the question of UNPREDEP in May next year. That consideration will indeed be the final one.

The President: I now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/1996/979.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Botswana, Chile, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Indonesia, Italy, Poland, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Russian Federation

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1082 (1996).

There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.